Preparation of annual report by Prasar Bharati

693. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCATING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that even after seven years of its existence, Prasar Bharati has not prepared even a single Annual Report;

(b) whether it is also a fact that preparation of Annual Report is mandatory under the Prasar Bharati Act; and

(c) if so, the reasons for not preparing the Annual Reports?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCATING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (c) Section 32(2)(k) of Prasar Bharati Act stipulates that the Central Government may by notification, make rules, which may provide the form in which and the time within which, the Corporation shall prepare their Annual Report under Section 31 of the said Act. The Government on 18th May, 2004, notified the rules in this regard, which are known as Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India), Annual Report of the Corporation Rules, 2004. Prasar Bharati has set in motion the process of preparation of Annual Report as required under the Prasar Bharati. Act. Prior to issuance of these rules, the information pertaining to the Prasar Bharati has been incorporated in the Annual Report of the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting.

Geetakrishnan Committee on Expenditure Reforms

694. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Geetakrishnan Committee on Expenditure Reforms had recommended that DAVP should be wound up;

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto;

(c) when the existing guidelines relating to advertisement policy were framed;

(d) whether views of the newspaper industry were taken into consideration at that point of time; and

(e) as these guidelines are required to be revised urgently in consultation with the newspaper industry by when Governement propose to do that?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) The Geetakrishnan Committee on Expenditure

Reforms had recommended that the activities of the Directorate of Advertising & Visual Publicity (DAVP) including release of advertisements, could be decentralised and left to the individual Ministries/Departments and DAVP should concern itself with establishment of rate contracts relating to advertisements to be followed by various Ministries.

(b) The Government is of the view that if the activities of DAVP are decentralised, the Ministries/Departments could need more staff than that with DAVP at present and thereby defeat the very purpose of economy in Government. DAVP has been providing facilities at single point with various inputs including plan, design, language versions, multi-media requirements and maintenance of fairness and balance among different categories of newspapers across the country. Moreover, DAVP is able to secure less than the market prices for Government by virtue of being bulk purchases of space in print media. The Government is, therefore, not inclined to amend the Allocation of Business Rules to allow the Ministries/Departments to advertise directly to newspapers. However, in order to rationalize DAVP structure and bring in economy, 114 posts in DAVP have now been identified for abolition, out of which, 37 posts have already been abolished.

(c) to (e) The existing guidelines relating to the Advertisement Policy have come into force with effect from 1 st May, 2002. These guidelines are revised from time to time keeping in view the changing circumstances in consultation with newspaper associations.

FM Radio Stations

695. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal to set up 25 FM Radio Stations;

(b) if so, the details and locations thereof; and

(c) by when these ratio stations would become operational?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCATING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (c) Seventy new FM radio stations are proposed to be set-up during 10th Five Year Plan, in the country. Details are given in the Statement (See below). In addition, 150 Low Power FM Transmitters are also planned in uncovered areas subject to approval and availability of resources.